

READING RESPONSE JOURNAL

adapted from Teachers.net

As you read, write your personal response in your reading journal. State your feelings, thoughts, reactions, and questions about situations, ideas, actions, characters, settings, symbols, plots, themes, and any other elements in the story. You can't be wrong in your responses as long as you support your answers with proof from the text.

Write about what you like and dislike, what seems confusing or unusual to you. Tell what something means. Make predictions about what might happen later based on proof from the text and your background knowledge. Relate your personal experiences which connect with the plot, characters or setting. Don't just retell the plot. Let me hear your voice. Remember - your response journal is a place to record your reactions and questions, not a place to summarize what you've read. Sometimes, a summary will be necessary to get your point across but you must support these summaries with what you are feeling or thinking as you read the book.

After you read the selection, ask yourself these questions. Decide which would make the best entry for your response journal. You may certainly use other ideas of your own. The following starters are simply suggestions for you to use.

I wonder what (this) means...

I really don't understand (this part) because...

I really like/dislike (this idea) because...

This character reminds me of (somebody I know) because...

This character reminds me of me because...

This character is like (name of the character) in (title of book) because...

I think (this) setting is important because...

(This) scene reminds me of a similar scene in (title of book) because...

I like/dislike (this writing) because...

(This part) is very realistic/unrealistic because...

I think the relationship between _____ and _____ is interesting because...

I like/dislike (name of character) because...

(This situation) reminds me of a similar situation in my own life. It happened when...

The character I most admire is _____ because...

If I were (name of character) at this point, I would...

Questions to Answer	Sentence Starters	Sentence Starters
What you liked or disliked about the writing style, the plot, the setting, the characters, etc. and why.	I began to think (of)...	If I were...
What you wish had happened and why.	I love the way...	I'm not sure...
What you wish the author had included and why.	I can't believe...	I felt sad when...
Your opinion of the characters and what they say or do.	I wonder (why)...	I like the way the author...
Your opinion of the illustrations, table and figures.	I noticed...	I wish that...
What you felt as you read and why.	I think...	This made me think of...
What you noticed when you read.	I observed...	I was surprised that...
Questions you have after reading.	This story teaches...	It seems like...

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- Take time to write down anything in relation to the text. If you are intrigued by certain statements or if you are attracted to characters or issues or problems, write your response. Try to take at least five minutes to write when you've finished an assignment or when you've put down your book for a break. You may want to write something that strikes you then.
- Make connections with your own experience. What does the reading make you think of? Does it remind you of anyone or anything.
- Make connections with other texts or concepts or events. Do you see any similarities between this text (concept, events) and other texts (concepts, events)? Does it bring to mind other related issues?
- Ask yourself questions about the text: What perplexes you about a particular passage? Try beginning, "I wonder why..." or "I'm having trouble understanding how..." or "It perplexes me that..." or "I was surprised when..."
- Try agreeing with the writer. Write down supporting ideas. Try arguing with the writer. On what points, or about what issues, do you disagree? Think of your journal as a place to carry on a dialogue with the writer or with the text in which you actually speak with him or her. Ask questions and have the writer respond. What happens when you imagine yourself in his/her shoes?
- Write down striking words, images, phrases, or details. Speculate about them. Why did the author choose them? What do they add to the story? Why did you notice them?
- Use sticky notes or tabs to mark passages that intrigue you as you read. Choose the most interesting ideas to write about in your journal.
- Describe the author's point of view. How does the author's attitude shape the way the writer presents the material?

Adapted from the faculty of Bard College Language and Thinking Program

<http://www.sdcoe.k12.ca.us/score/actbank/tjouguide.htm>